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Co-operation in Letelier Bombing Probe Sought

U.S. Relations With Chile Face Chilly Future

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The United States will adopt a policy of increasing coolness toward Chile unless that country cooperates in the investigation of the bombing murder here of exiled former Ambassador Orlando Letelier, officials indicated today.

Such a response was indicated by several officials as all U.S. ambassadors to Latin America gather here for a three-day meeting.

The government of President Augusto Pinochet has been asked by court officials here to have the Chilean Supreme Court question under oath two men who U.S. investigators believe possess knowledge of the 1976 assassination of Letelier and his associate Ronni Moffitt.

U.S. Ambassador to Chile George Landau probably left Santiago for Washington before the "letters interrogatory" from U.S. Attorney Earl J. Silbert arrived by diplomatic pouch in Santiago.

"WE ARE HOLDING their feet to the fire and they are damned if they do or damned if they don't," said one official close to the case. The embarrassment for the Chilean government is that the United States knows the two men were issued Chilean diplomatic passports to the United States just before Letelier's murder in September 1976. The men have been identified as Juan Williams Rose and Alejandro Romeral Jara. Those names are probable aliases.

"Everybody knows these were phony names," an official said. The implication is that the two men were agents of DINA, the former Chilean secret police organization. "Either way Chile is in a corner. They can't deny that two men were given official passports under those names, undoubtedly false. They might brazen it out and insist that they have no record of such people, and that would be true if the names are false, but how can they explain asking us for passports for men who do not exist?" The passports were issued by the U.S. Embassy in Santiago.

Assistant U.S. Attorney Eugene Propper, who has handled the Letelier case, is believed to have been in Chile once already and in Venezuela twice in search of evidence.

Chief U.S. District Judge William B. Bryant's covering letter asks that Propper be allowed to sit in on the Chilean court's questioning of the men.

IT ISN'T KNOWN whether Propper decided to go ahead with sending the "letters interrogatory" because his case is nearly complete against the bombers or whether he is attempting to gain additional information. Obviously, Propper has not been able to call "Williams" and "Romeral" before the grand jury. The grand jury has, however, questioned Chilean consular officer Hector Duran, anti-Castro Cuban exile leaders Roberto Carballo,

Armando Lopez Estrada, Alvin Ross Diaz and Jose Dionisio Suarez.

Ross and Suarez were cited for contempt for refusing to answer grand jury questions but only Suarez was sent to jail last April in strategy by Propper that is still not explained. Suarez is considered by those familiar with the case to be less likely than Ross to cooperate with the prosecutors. Unless Suarez breaks his silence by the time the grand jury completes its term in March, U.S. officials probably will have to charge him or release him.

As reconstructed by some close to the case, the scenario that led to the killings of Letelier and Moffitt is probably something like this: One of the two suspected DINA agents, whose real names are not known but whose photos are in possession of investigators, came to Miami in the spring of 1976 to confer with Duran. Some think they were acting on orders of the DINA chief, Col. Manuel Contreras Sepulveda.

IT IS THOUGHT that Duran then arranged for the DINA agent or agents to meet with Cuban exile leaders in Miami and that they in turn subcontracted the Letelier "hit" to other Cubans in Union City, N.J. Officials believe there were two trips to the United States from Chile by the DINA agents before the plot was carried out Sept. 21, 1976. Letelier's car was blown up at Sheridan Circle as he drove to work with Moffitt in the front seat and her husband, Michael, in the back seat.

Other U.S. officials doubt that two DINA agents in their late 20s would carry out such a plot without authorization from their chief.

Some officials think the Chilean government would say that the two men acted on their own and that Santiago has no knowledge of a plot to kill Letelier.

There is no mention of the Letelier case on the agenda for the meeting of U.S. chiefs of mission. But Landau is scheduled to give an address tomorrow on the view from the field on human rights policies and goals of the Carter administration.

The meeting also will hear CIA Director Stansfield Turner; Secretary of State Cyrus R. Vance; Sen. Paul Sarbanes, D-Md.; Assistant Secretary of State Terence Todman; Patt Derian, human rights advisor to Vance; and Robert Pastor, the National Security Council expert on Latin America.